IN THE CLAIMS:

Substitute the following claims for the pending claims having the same numbers.

1. (previously presented) A method of installing a well screen in a subterranean well, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the screen including a filtering layer with a temporary sealing substance impregnated in the filtering layer and preventing fluid flow through the filtering layer;

positioning the screen in a wellbore of the well;

expanding the screen in the wellbore; and

degrading the sealing substance, thereby permitting fluid flow through the filtering layer, and the degrading step being performed after the expanding step.

2-3. (canceled)

4. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the degrading step further comprises exposing the sealing substance to water in the wellbore.

5. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the degrading step further comprises exposing the sealing substance to elevated temperature in the wellbore.

6. (previously presented) A method of installing a well screen in a subterranean well, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the screen including a filtering layer with a temporary sealing substance impregnated in the filtering layer and preventing fluid flow through the filtering layer, the sealing substance comprising a degradable polymer;

positioning the screen in a wellbore of the well;

expanding the screen in the wellbore; and

degrading the sealing substance, thereby permitting fluid flow through the filtering layer.

7. (original) The method according to claim 6, wherein the degradable polymer comprises a polysaccharide, chitin, chitosan, protein, aliphatic polyester, poly(lactide), poly(glycolide), poly(ε-caprolactone), poly(hydroxybutyrate), poly(anhydride), aliphatic polycarbonate, poly(orthoester), poly(amino acid), poly(ethylene oxide), or a polyphosphazene.

8. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the providing step further comprises positioning the filtering layer between an outer shroud and an inner base pipe of the screen.

9. (previously presented) A method of installing a well screen in a subterranean well, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the screen including a filtering layer with a temporary sealing substance impregnated in the filtering layer

and preventing fluid flow through the filtering layer, and the providing step further including providing the screen with a source of water in the form of a hydrated organic or inorganic solid compound;

positioning the screen in a wellbore of the well;

expanding the screen in the wellbore; and

degrading the sealing substance, thereby permitting fluid flow through the filtering layer.

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 10, further comprising the step of~~ A method of installing a well screen in a subterranean well, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the screen including a temporary sealing substance preventing fluid flow through a wall of the screen, the temporary sealing substance comprising a polysaccharide, chitin, chitosan, protein, aliphatic polyester, poly(lactide), poly(glycolide), poly(ε-caprolactone), poly(hydroxybutyrate), poly(anhydride), aliphatic polycarbonate, poly(orthoester), poly(amino acid), poly(ethylene oxide), or a polyphosphazene;

conveying the screen into a wellbore of the well while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall;

circulating fluid through the screen while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall;

degrading the sealing substance, thereby permitting fluid flow through the screen wall; and

expanding the screen in the wellbore.

12. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the expanding step further comprises using an expander tool to expand the screen, and wherein the conveying step further comprises conveying the expander tool into the wellbore with the screen.

13. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the expanding step is performed while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall.

14. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the conveying and expanding steps are performed in a single trip into the well.

15. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the degrading step is performed prior to the expanding step.

16. (original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the degrading step is performed after the expanding step.

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 10, wherein~~ A method of installing a well screen in a subterranean well, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the screen including a temporary sealing substance preventing fluid flow through a wall of the screen, the temporary sealing substance comprising a polysaccharide, chitin, chitosan, protein, aliphatic polyester, poly(lactide), poly(glycolide), poly(ε-caprolactone), poly(hydroxybutyrate), poly(anhydride), aliphatic polycarbonate, poly(orthoester), poly(amino acid), poly(ethylene oxide), or a polyphosphazene;

conveying the screen into a wellbore of the well while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall;

circulating fluid through the screen while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall, the circulating step ~~is~~ being performed prior to expanding the screen in the wellbore ; and

degrading the sealing substance, thereby permitting fluid flow through the screen wall.

19. (original) The method according to claim 18, wherein the conveying, circulating and expanding steps are performed in a single trip into the well.

20-22. (canceled)

23. (currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 22,~~ A method of installing a well screen in a subterranean well, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the screen including a temporary sealing substance preventing fluid flow through a wall of the screen, the temporary sealing substance comprising a polysaccharide,

chitin, chitosan, protein, aliphatic polyester, poly(lactide), poly(glycolide), poly(ε-caprolactone), poly(hydroxybutyrate), poly(anhydride), aliphatic polycarbonate, poly(orthoester), poly(amino acid), poly(ethylene oxide), or a polyphosphazene;

conveying the screen into a wellbore of the well while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall;

circulating fluid through the screen while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall; and

degrading the sealing substance, thereby permitting fluid flow through the screen wall, and

wherein the providing step further comprises impregnating a filtering layer of the screen with the sealing substance, and positioning the filtering layer between an outer shroud and an inner base pipe of the screen.

24. (currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 10,~~ A method of installing a well screen in a subterranean well, the method comprising the steps of:

providing the screen including a temporary sealing substance preventing fluid flow through a wall of the screen, the temporary sealing substance comprising a polysaccharide, chitin, chitosan, protein, aliphatic polyester, poly(lactide), poly(glycolide), poly(ε-caprolactone), poly(hydroxybutyrate), poly(anhydride), aliphatic polycarbonate, poly(orthoester), poly(amino acid), poly(ethylene oxide), or a polyphosphazene;

conveying the screen into a wellbore of the well while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall;

circulating fluid through the screen while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the screen wall; and

degrading the sealing substance, thereby permitting fluid flow through the screen wall, and

wherein the providing step further comprises providing the screen with a source of water in the form of a hydrated organic or inorganic solid compound.

25-28. (canceled)

29. (previously presented) An expandable well screen system, comprising

a well screen including a filtering layer impregnated with a temporary sealing substance which prevents fluid from flowing through the filtering layer, the filtering layer being positioned between an outer shroud and an inner base pipe of the screen, and

wherein the screen has an expanded configuration and an unexpanded configuration in a well.

30. (canceled)

31. (original) The system according to claim 29, further comprising an expander tool attached to the screen while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the filtering layer.

32. (original) The system according to claim 31, wherein the expander tool expands the screen from the unexpanded

configuration to the expanded configuration while the sealing substance prevents fluid flow through the filtering layer.

33. (previously presented) An expandable well screen system, comprising

a well screen including a filtering layer impregnated with a temporary sealing substance which prevents fluid from flowing through the filtering layer, the sealing substance degrading when exposed to a water source in the well, and

wherein the screen has an expanded configuration and an unexpanded configuration in a well.

34. (original) The system according to claim 33, wherein the water source is included in the screen.

35. (original) The system according to claim 34, wherein the water source comprises a hydrated organic or inorganic compound.

36. (original) The system according to claim 33, wherein the water source is present in the well prior to positioning the screen in the well.

37. (original) The system according to claim 33, wherein the water source is introduced into the well after positioning the screen in the well.

38. (original) The system according to claim 29, wherein the sealing substance comprises a degradable polymer.

39. (original) The system according to claim 38, wherein the degradable polymer comprises a polysaccharide, chitin, chitosan, protein, aliphatic polyester, poly(lactide), poly(glycolide), poly(ε-caprolactone), poly(hydroxybutyrate), poly(anhydride), aliphatic polycarbonate, poly(orthoester), poly(amino acid), poly(ethylene oxide), or a polyphosphazene.

40. (original) The system according to claim 29, wherein the sealing substance comprises a plasticizer.

41. (original) The system according to claim 29, wherein the sealing substance comprises poly(lactic acid).

42. (original) The system according to claim 29, wherein the sealing substance comprises a stereoisomer of a poly(lactide).

43. (original) The system according to claim 29, wherein the sealing substance comprises poly(phenyllactide).